

# Annual Report

2022





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# ABOUT FMNS

Founded in 2004, FMNS is a non-profit cooperative and the only farmers' market sector association in Atlantic Canada. With over 40 unique members representing over 1,500 owner-operated businesses across the province, our cooperative is the unified voice of our region's farmers' market sector.

- Vision
  - Together, our organization and our members are building a cooperative and dynamic farmers' market sector cultivating successful businesses, vibrant local economies, and healthy communities.
- Mission
  - Our cooperative advances growth and prosperity for our member farmers' markets and their vendors through training, resources, advocacy, promotion, and community.
- Our Core Values
  - Buying Local: Because FMNS values a "make it, bake it, grow it" policy and a buy local philosophy, we actively work to ensure that our cooperative, our member markets, and our vendors do their part to support local economic activity, create local jobs, and promote import substitution.
  - Economic Development: Because FMNS values economic development and vibrant communities, we work to promote and strengthen our member farmers' markets to be leaders and hubs of social and economic activity in their communities.
  - Incubation: Because FMNS recognizes that our farmers' markets are business incubators, we track, encourage, and support our member markets to enable their vendors to grow their businesses.
  - Education: Because FMNS values education and the growth and professionalization of our sector, we offer a variety of in-person trainings, webinars, and online resources so our member markets can continue to succeed.
  - Cooperation: Because FMNS values community, cooperation, and collaboration, we build and grow a community of practice and support, including hosting in-person and online gatherings and discussion groups for our member managers, support staff, volunteers, and vendors.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

It continues to be my great pleasure to serve on the Board of Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia and to represent the members. This Annual Report contains much of what we focused on over the past year – challenges, successes, ongoing programs, and projects – and I invite you to read through it to gain an appreciation of what FMNS is all about.

As I approach the end of my term on the Board of Directors, I want to recognize and acknowledge the people of our markets, as they are what we are truly about.

The vendors: such a talented, creative, intelligent group of makers, bakers, growers, and producers. Our vendors have faced the challenges left by a global pandemic, changes in how they interact with customers, and rising input costs, and still show up on market day with smiles, stories to share, and high-quality products. The relationships created between vendors and customers are what brings people back to markets and make all our roles possible. Marketing and social media may bring customers through the door, but the experience with vendors while at the market is what brings them back.

The customers: in a province where many food options exist, they are our market supporters, many coming every week to buy local products. They become our extended market family, and their choices and needs shape what we do. Our customers provide feedback, test new products for us, share a laugh, participate in events, and share their experiences with others. They are cheerleaders for local producers and businesses.

Managers: the heartbeat of the markets, their focus on doing what's best for their markets contributes to the variety, scale, activities, and atmosphere of each unique farmers' market. They have such enthusiasm, knowledge, and organizational skills, and are generally willing to share their best practices with others. Belonging to the group of market managers in this province has been one of my proudest roles.

Volunteers: yep, volunteers; people who give their time and share their skills because they believe in what we are doing, without an agenda beyond supporting their market. Whether they distribute online orders, work the market booth on a Saturday, set up tables for events, or do any of the many other things we need help with, they are amazing. There is a special place for the volunteers who join our Boards and add meetings, policy development, and strategic planning to their roles. We appreciate your contributions.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

FMNS Staff: what an incredible pool of talent and skills these people share with us every week. As our sector has grown and added new programs, our staff has grown as well, and while our human resources skills have struggled to keep pace, we recognize how fortunate we are to have this dedicated and capable group on our team. A look at this report shows the variety of projects they undertake on behalf of member markets. Our thanks to Justin, Alicia, Emily, Hannah, and Rebekkah for all you have done to coordinate, market, advocate for, communicate with, and encourage us.

Supporters: you all have them – the champions of your individual market, or the sector overall. They may be partner organizations, media, local businesses or business organizations, politicians, commodity groups, resource people... wherever you find them, you know you can count on them for help and advice when you need it.

Thank you to all these people and anyone who has a role in making the farmers' markets in our province the fantastic experiences that they are.

Margaret Ells,  
*President*

# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we near the end of the year, we're offered a rare opportunity to slow down and reflect on where we've come from and where we're going, while celebrating our successes and looking forward to those to come. We hope you take some time to go through this Annual Report and take stock of the hard work our organization and our member markets have been up to!

While this past year has in many ways brought us a long-awaited feeling of normal, it's easy to forget that we started off 2022 in a provincial state of emergency. And somehow, some way, almost every Saturday in January and February was greeted with a major winter storm. Our sector lost countless market days as a result, yet just like the past two years of uncertainty, our farmers' markets and their vendors still managed to bravely pave a way forward, offering Nova Scotians the opportunity to shop local, access healthy food, and stay connected with their communities.

The lifting of the provincial state of emergency earlier in the year came with it the opportunity to take a deep breath and shift from being reactive to proactive. And that's exactly what we did. We grew our Board by two positions, bringing on two incredibly experienced people to help us continue growing our impact. We seized the opportunity to work with Kat Frick Miller – an amazing local illustrator who has designed many graphic elements for us in the past – to design a brand-new beautiful logo for us, our first new logo since we were founded in 2004!

In the spring we had a big win, successfully working with the Province to change the Public Utilities Act to ensure that farmers' markets will no longer be charged commercial electricity rates and demand charges. We continued finding innovative ways of driving more market shoppers to our farmers' markets, launching another province-wide marketing campaign under the creative genius of Emily, our Communications and Creative Lead, who helped to significantly grow our social media following and our Basket Newsletter followers. Our team doubled down on training and learning opportunities, rolling out a new Training Tuesdays webinar series and hosting the Nourishing Communities Learning Summit in April.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

During our Membership and Program Coordinator Alicia's parental leave, Hannah and then Rebekkah both stepped up admirably. We're so excited to have had Alicia come back in the fall to continue growing the impact of our Nourishing Communities program and deepening connections with our members with her signature tact and kindness. And I'm thrilled that we've been able to keep Rebekkah, who quickly became indispensable with her keen eye for detail and has settled in as a fantastic compliment to our staff team. I'd like to extend a hearty thank you to Hannah for her hard work during her short but impactful time here with us.

As I look back on 2022, I'm filled with gratitude and appreciation for our organization, our members, and our sector. I'm also feeling, more than ever, a steadfast appreciation for the power of farmers' markets to connect us, to feed us, and to make us feel human. To thrive at the community level.

A massive thank you to our staff for their hard work, to our Board members for their crucial guidance and leadership, to our member markets and our vendors for making Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector so special, to the Province of Nova Scotia for its indispensable funding support, and to our partners for all your hard work. I hope you all get some time to relax and reflect, and I look forward to working with you all in 2023 and beyond!

Warm regards,  
Justin Cantafio  
*Executive Director*



# MEET THE TEAM (BOARD + STAFF)

## Board of Directors

- Margaret Ells, President
- Ashley Marlin, Vice-President
- Gareth Winsor, Treasurer
- Rachael Browne, Secretary
- Robin Johnston, Member at Large
- Pauline Singer, Member at Large
- Therese Cruz, Member at Large
- Rhonda Johnson, Member at Large



## Staff

- Justin Cantafio, Executive Director
- Alicia Steeves, Membership & Programs Lead
- Emily Lawrence, Communications & Creative Lead
- Rebekkah Hyams, Administrative Lead





# MEMBERSHIP

- Our cooperative currently has 42\* member farmers' markets across the province!
  - Please [click here](#) for an interactive map and information about our member markets.
- For more information or to join our cooperative, [click here](#).

\* In 2022, we had three member farmers' markets postpone their market seasons for the year.



# FMNS STRATEGIC PLAN (2019-2023)

By the end of 2021, we'd practically hit all our Strategic Objectives outlined in our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan! Beginning in the fall of 2022, FMNS started working with Third Sector Enhancement to launch a new 3-year Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2025.

Here is how we're faring regarding our 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities as of the end of 2022:

- **Clearly and concisely communicate the benefits of membership in our cooperative to member and non-member markets**
  - FMNS unveiled a brand-new website in 2021 and continued updating it throughout 2022 to better communicate what our organization does, and to drive more customers to our member markets.
  - We've reorganized our members-only password protected resource library. All staff, managers, board members, and vendors of FMNS member farmers' markets can get their own unique password to our library. Email [info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca) if you don't have your password yet.
  - We grew the subscription list of our members-only monthly industry newsletter in 2022. Email [info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca) if you'd like to be added to the list.
  - We've continued to strengthen and grow our cooperative, bringing on two new member markets in 2022 and expecting several new members in 2023.
- **Promote the sector and increase member market visitor traffic (and improve vendor sales as a result)**
  - We secured funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture for a multi-platform marketing campaign in 2022, enabling FMNS to continue providing increased marketing and promotions support for our sector and our members to increase visitor traffic and sales opportunities for vendors.
  - We printed and distributed 24,350 physical farmers' markets maps throughout the province in 2022.
  - FMNS set aside 24 marketing grants worth \$200 each specifically for BIPOC-owned farmers' market businesses so that they could market their businesses in a way that was most impactful for them.
  - FMNS worked with the Department of Agriculture to set aside 15 booth spaces (five spaces per day for three days) at both the Saltscapes Spring Expo in April 2022 and the Saltscapes Harvest Greet the Holidays event in October 2022, supporting 30 unique FMNS member farmers' market vendors with free booths.
  - For further information about our marketing and promotions activities, please go to our Marketing Report on Page 18.

# FMNS STRATEGIC PLAN (2019-2023)

- **Advocate as a leader and voice for the sector**
  - FMNS has continued to ensure that we are recognized by the Province of Nova Scotia as the official sector association for Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector.
  - We continuously worked with provincial and federal representatives to have our sector recognized as essential service providers and ensure that our farmers' markets could stay open and safely operate during the State of Emergency, which remained in effect until March 2022.
  - FMNS personally met with Directors with several key Departments throughout 2022, ensuring that our sector is strategically positioned as the Province looks to launch its Nova Scotia Food & Beverage Strategy and its *Nova Scotia Loyal* program in 2023.
- **Ensure long-term financial sustainability through diversified revenue streams**
  - FMNS increased its sales of merchandise, at a discount wholesale rate to our member farmers' markets, and through our [online shop](#) to the public.
  - FMNS also soft-launched its brand-new Donor Program in early 2022, enabling individual, small business, and corporate donors to support FMNS and our activities. You can view the donation page by [clicking here](#).
- **Continue and enhance community building for member market managers**
  - Throughout 2022, FMNS engaged one-on-one with our member farmers' markets, while providing shared online learning activities, and opportunities for in-person collaboration through both our 2022 AGM in Truro and our Nourishing Communities Learning Summit in Dartmouth.
  - FMNS has continued to grow and maintain our FMNS Market Managers & Staff private Facebook group, which allows managers to communicate with one another, ask questions, and share best practices. If you're a manager and you'd like to join this group, please email [info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca).
- **Affordable membership**
  - At our 2022 AGM, our membership voted to create a new membership levy to ensure that our member farmers' markets are charged a fair and equitable amount, regardless of their size. To learn more about our annual membership fees, please [click here](#).
  - Our levy is now:
    - \$1.25 per vendor, per week of operation for farmers' markets with a season length of 26 or more weeks per year.
    - \$1.75 per vendor, per week of operation for farmers' markets with a season length of less than 26 weeks per year.

# FMNS STRATEGIC PLAN (2019-2023)

- **Maintain and increase our HR capacity to better serve our members**
  - We grew our HR capacity still further in 2022, with FMNS staff now comprised of 4 positions for the first time ever in our cooperatives nearly 20-year history!
- **Empower our markets to better empower their vendors**
  - FMNS secured generous funding from the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to completely update our *How to Start & Grow your Business at the Farmers' Market* guidebook, specifically created for aspiring and existing entrepreneurs.
  - FMNS will work with new and existing partner organizations in 2023 to ensure that digital and printed versions of this and other guidebooks are distributed throughout the province, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that they make their way to underrepresented communities, including folks who identify as BIPOC and/or New Canadians.
- **Help markets and vendors navigate and react to new food safety regulations**
  - FMNS worked incessantly with provincial health and safety representatives to stay on top of all restrictions. Since March 2020, we regularly released provincially accepted sector-specific COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. FMNS stopped issuing these prevention plans when the Provincial State of Emergency was lifted in March 2022, but you can view the most recent plan by [clicking here](#).
  - In 2022, FMNS met regularly with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Climate Change to ensure that its updated *Public Market Guidelines* were consistent and effective. FMNS successfully challenged several proposed changes to ensure that regulations remain fair and appropriate for our sector and did not harm our membership.

# SUMMARY OF OTHER 2022 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **New logo**
  - We're thrilled to have had the chance to have Kat Frick Miller design our logo. She created a collection of options for us to use in different contexts and nailed our grassroots but timeless vision.
- **New marketing elements**
  - Kat Frick Miller also designed a new tote bag for us, as well as 10 more illustrations to use in our branding.
- **Lobbying**
  - FMNS successfully lobbied to ensure that farmers' markets were viewed as essential economic infrastructure during all of 2021 and into 2022, making sure that farmers' markets could operate at full capacity and without the need to require proof of vaccination.
  - After multiple meetings and significant pressure, including a massive press campaign that we launched in the winter of 2021 and into early 2022, FMNS successfully lobbied the Province of Nova Scotia to amend its *Public Utilities Act* in April 2022, so that farmers' markets are no longer charged commercial electricity rates, saving some markets thousands of dollars per year!
- **Training Tuesdays webinar series**
  - Based on feedback we received in our 2021 Annual Membership Survey, FMNS designed a series of eight live webinars that took place once a week during the months of March and April. These webinars were designed specifically for farmers' market vendors, staff, and board members.
  - All 2021 and 2022 Training Tuesday webinars are available for FMNS members and their vendors in our password-protected resource library by [clicking here](#).
  - We will be continuing the Training Tuesdays webinar series in 2023!
- **FMNS Marketing Education**
  - In addition to one-on-one support for our members, we also hosted two marketing webinars in 2022, which were "Social Media 101 for Vendors" and "Visual Branding, Canva, and Photography".
  - Our members can find these materials by accessing our password-protected resource library.



# SUMMARY OF OTHER 2022 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Collaboration**

- FMNS was a key organizer of the Dig In Atlantic Food Systems Summit, which took place during November in Debert, Nova Scotia.
- FMNS continues to be a leader in regional, national, and international collaboration, building and strengthening a network of farmers' market organizations to learn and share best practices so that we can bring the best of the best to our cooperative:
- Justin Cantafio, Executive Director of FMNS, was recently named one of five 2023 Nuffield Canada Scholars and will represent Nova Scotia's farmers' markets at the international level.
- FMNS is the founding Organization of the Canadian Farmers' Markets coalition, which was founded in November 2020 and incorporated as a non-profit in July 2022. Canadian Farmers' Markets now has every provincial farmers' market association in the nation in its membership and meets once a month to share resources, opportunities, and concerns. FMNS' Executive Director serves as the President of Canadian Farmers' Markets.
- Canadian Farmers' Markets, led by FMNS, is a founding organization of the World Farmers Markets Coalition, founded in 2021. The World Farmers Markets Coalition now meets approximately once a month and has representatives from all continents.

- **FMNS Donor Strategy**

- Soft launched in early 2022, FMNS has put together a tiered donor strategy to attract individual, small business, and corporate sponsorship dollars that will support our core activities and programming and contribute to increasing the impact of our *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program*.
- Donors have the option to receive 50% of the value of their donation back to them as food bucks at a market of their choice.
- For more information about our new Donor Strategy, please [click here](#).

- **Marketing activities**

- For a review of our marketing and promotions activities, please view our Marketing Report on page 18.

# SUMMARY OF OTHER 2022 PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

- **Halifax Regional Food Hub**

- Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia, along with the Mobile Food Market, Nourish Nova Scotia, Feed Nova Scotia, and the Halifax Food Policy Alliance / Just Food Halifax, formed a working group in early 2022 to explore the possibility of an urban food hub to address the lack of regionally appropriate local food infrastructure in the HRM.
- The Province of Nova Scotia has funded Flourish Community Development Co-operative to create a feasibility study and business plan for a Halifax-based food hub, which will include the development of centralized infrastructure for the aggregation, storage, processing, marketing, and distribution of local food to improve the connection between local producers and commercial, non-profit, and institutional buyers.
- FMNS is actively working to build a local food ecosystem in Nova Scotia, and FMNS strongly believes that this urban hub infrastructure could hold tremendous opportunities for farmers' market vendors, be they primary or secondary producers, who may wish to scale up their production and/or connect with larger market opportunities to strengthen their businesses.
- A minimum viable product will be presented to the Province of Nova Scotia in early 2023.

# NOURISHING COMMUNITIES FOOD COUPON PROGRAM UPDATES FOR 2022

FMNS was able to significantly grow our program from 27 markets in 2021 to 33 markets in 2022, issuing approximately \$400,000 in anonymous but fully trackable alternative currencies to over 700 low-income households facing food insecurity across the province in 2022, up from \$260,000 to 500 households in 2021.

FMNS and our member farmers' markets worked with over 75 partner social organizations across the province. We intend to grow this program to over 35 member farmers' markets and to issue over \$500,000 in food bucks to over 1,000 households in 2023.

FMNS hosted our *Nourishing Communities Learning Summit* in April 2022 at the Zatzman Sportsplex in Dartmouth. The Learning Summit event was attended by farmers' market managers, volunteers, and staff, as well as community partners, program participants, and other local organizations.

This event supported program administrators from both markets and partner organizations in developing a deeper and more expansive understanding of the Nourishing Communities program and its impacts. The objective was to promote the ongoing growth and success of the program while thinking about how farmers' markets might better serve their communities.

The summit included a presentation by Acadia University student Erika Bout on the findings from her extensive research interviewing Nourishing Communities participants across the province about their experiences in the program. **Note: [click here](#) to review Erika's Summary Report.**

This event was about bringing together people from across the province, in a wide range of roles and from different program evolutions, to share their ideas, successes, and challenges. This 'meeting of the minds' provided an exceptional learning and growth opportunity for farmers' markets and associated organizations to consider good practices, problem solve, and reflect together.

# ABOUT THE NOURISHING COMMUNITIES PROGRAM

The Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Project (NCFCP) involves FMNS working with our member farmers' markets and partner social organizations to increase food security, help break the cycle of poverty, and support individuals and families in need across Nova Scotia. The NCFCP allows project participants to use an anonymous alternative currency, or *food bucks*, which can be redeemed at any vendor stall at participating markets. Working with one to three partner organizations, each farmers' market manager selects the partner organizations based on those social organizations' mandates and the individuals they serve. Partner organizations select individuals, couples, and families in need who will benefit from reduced food insecurity and increased social inclusion.

2022 marked the forth year of our program, where we expanded to 33 member farmers' markets thanks to generous funding provided by Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage Nova Scotia and from Second Harvest, a charitable organization.

For more information about the program, including a report that demonstrates its incredible impact in 2021 (2022 report available soon), please [click here](#).

\*\*\* We look forward to further expanding this project in 2023! If you're interested in supporting this program, please [click here](#)! \*\*\*

# MARKETING

- Social media followers
  - Instagram followers (annual growth = +19.8%)
    - December 2021: 10,100
    - December 2022: 12,100
  - Facebook followers (annual growth = +24.5%)
    - December 2021: 13,946
    - December 2022: 17,496
  - Twitter followers (annual growth = +4.6%)
    - December 2021: 9,040
    - December 2022: 9,455
  - Total followers on social media (annual growth = +18%)
    - December 2021: 33,086
    - December 2022: 39,051
- Market Vendor Connect
  - Market Vendor Connect is a private Facebook group that serves as an online community for FMNS to interact directly with farmers' market managers, staff, and most importantly, vendors. This online group is particularly helpful for farmers' market managers looking for new vendors.
  - Members (annual growth = +7.7%)
    - December 2021: 547
    - December 2022: 590
- I ♥ NS Farmers' Markets
  - I ♥ NS Farmers' Markets is a public Facebook group that serves as an online community for FMNS to interact directly with farmers' market shoppers.
  - Members (annual growth = 43.3%)
    - December 2021: 1,563
    - December 2022: 2,239
- Website usage
  - Users (annual growth = +10.4%)
    - December 2021: 39,044
    - December 2022: 43,109
  - Pageviews (annual growth = 12.9%)
    - December 2021: 86,705
    - December 2022: 97,871



# MARKETING

- Industry newsletter
  - Subscribers (annual growth = +14.5%)
    - December 2021: 654
    - December 2022: 749
- The Basket newsletter (public facing)
  - Subscribers (annual growth = +149.3%)
    - December 2021: 3,037
    - December 2022: 7,570
  - Open rate
    - 2021: 31.2%
    - 2022: 42.5%
- CTV Contest
  - We coordinated a contest with CTV that was advertised on television, their website, and social media.
  - Over 20,000 people entered the contest.
  - Through this contest, we FMNS gained over 1,200 Instagram followers and over 4,200 subscribers to our [Basket Newsletter](#).
- CTV Morning live features
  - We had the opportunity to feature three FMNS market vendors on CTV Morning Live to promote their businesses.
- Social media advertising
  - Paid advertising on Facebook, Instagram, and Google reaching 215,000 people in 2022.
  - Infographic campaign with [Haligonia Media](#), with six unique infographics in circulation to drive customers to our markets.
  - Increased [blog posts](#) to bring more website traffic.
- Print ads
  - FMNS had print ads in various publications, including Saltscapes, East Coast Living, and Grapevine Publishing, reaching tens of thousands of potential market shoppers.

# MARKETING

- Influencer project
  - We worked with three BIPOC influencers to visit three farmers' markets each and share their experiences through social media.
  - We wanted to prioritize elevating their authentic voices while supporting our markets and providing exposure to new audiences.
  - Each influencer received a stipend and \$1,125 in market money to visit multiple markets across the province.
  - Influencers were [Change is Brewing](#), [Cooking and Zu](#), and [Off the Eaten Path](#).
- Wholesale merchandise for members
  - We provide deep discounts on our merchandise to our member farmers' markets, allowing them to sell products at their markets and generate their own revenues.
  - Through orders from our member markets, we've calculated that there was a revenue for markets of \$8,700 in 2022.
- Print maps
  - We distributed 24,350 map brochures in 2022:
    - 10,650 went to member markets
    - 8,000 were distributed through Saltscapes
    - 4,500 went to NS Visitor Information Centres
    - 1,200 went to the Halifax Airport
- Holiday Campaign
  - Emily, our Communications & Creative Lead, created two gift guide blog posts and five infographics to feature local gift ideas and drive traffic to our website and member farmers' markets during the holiday season.

# OVERVIEW OF MAIN FUNDING SOURCES

- Marketing and promotions
  - We secured \$47,300 in pre-approved funds from the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture to help us cover the cost of our marketing and promotions activities for our sector. This includes our Market(ing) Grant for our membership and FMNS marketing campaign, which included digital and print ads and a television and radio commercials.
- Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program
  - Communities, Culture and Heritage Nova Scotia graciously contributed \$494,800 towards our 2022 Nourishing Communities program.
  - This, combined with a \$50,000 grant from [Second Harvest Food Rescue](#), allowed FMNS to significantly grow our program in 2022.
  - A minimum of \$350,000 has been permanently included in Nova Scotia's provincial budget for our Nourishing Communities program since 2021.
- Annual membership dues
  - We received \$46,193.70 in membership dues from 37 member farmers' markets in 2022.
- Merchandise revenue
  - We received \$14,318 in merchandise revenue from wholesale sales to our member markets and direct sales to the public.

# COMING UP IN 2023!

- Spring 2023 webinar series
  - Just like the past two years, FMNS will feature eight to nine webinars spread out once per week during March and April 2023.
  - Some webinars will be targeted towards farmers' market vendors, while others will be for farmers' market managers, staff, and board members.
- Continued growth of Nourishing Communities program
  - We're excitedly working on securing funding to grow and expand our *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program* to at least 35 farmers' markets in communities across Nova Scotia in 2023. Our objective is to help at least 1,000 low-income individuals to gain access to healthy local food and social inclusion at our member farmers' markets.
- Collaboration with the Government of Nova Scotia
  - FMNS will continue to work with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture's promotions arm to create printed maps of all the farmers' markets in Nova Scotia for 2023 and distribute them to tourism information hubs and other community facilities throughout the province.
  - FMNS will continue to work with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Department to ensure that our sector is prominently featured in and supported by the upcoming Nova Scotia Food & Beverage Strategy, which is expected to be launched in early 2023.
  - FMNS will continue to collaborate with the NSDA on their new *Nova Scotia Loyal* buy-local campaign that they will be launching in 2023, ensuring that our farmers' markets are strategically positioned in their new marketing and promotions strategy, and working collaboratively on projects to enhance the public profile of our sector.
- Annual General Meeting
  - Our next AGM will take place in the spring of 2023 at the Truro Farmers' Market. Here you'll have an opportunity to have your voice heard, vote on FMNS affairs, connect with your peers, and enjoy a trade show. Please stay tuned for updates in the New Year!
- Continued collaboration at the national and international level
  - FMNS is part of the planning committee for the 11th International Public Markets Conference, which will take place in Toronto in June 2023.

# COMING UP IN 2023!

- Table opportunities for new Canadians, LGBTQ2+, and/or BIPOC folx
  - FMNS will continue to work with various government departments and partner organizations to develop programs that allow individuals facing barriers entry to sell at our member farmers' markets.
  - Opportunities include funding solutions to cover the cost of table fees for vendors who might not normally be able to sell at farmers' markets, and FMNS is currently working with the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture on a pilot project that we hope to launch in the spring of 2023.
- Measuring the impact of Nova Scotia's farmers' market sector
  - FMNS wishes to undertake a new Rapid Market Assessment, which was last conducted in 2013, to demonstrate the economic and social impact of our individual farmers' markets and our sector.
  - This 10-year gap will enable us to demonstrate the growth of our sector over the past decade.
- Strategic partnerships with key organizations
  - Starting in 2022, FMNS began connecting with key partner organizations to strengthen our sector while ensuring it is inclusive and diverse.
  - We've met with groups such as the Centre for Women in Business, the Black Business Initiative, and the YMCA's YREACH program, and intend to build and strengthen our network of support for new and aspiring entrepreneurs and producers who wish to sell at the farmers' market.
- Updated Market Manager's Handbook
  - We'll be working to create a brand new, fully upgraded Market Manager's Handbook in 2023. This handbook will be available to our member markets, as well as aspiring farmers' markets.
  - Part of this process will also involve a series of intensive farmers' market manager training, the completion of which will result in a provincially accredited certificate of completion for farmers' market managers and staff!



# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Don't forget! Being a member of the FMNS Cooperative has tremendous benefits for farmers' market managers, staff, board members, and vendors. Here is an overview of some of the benefits you can take advantage of at any time!

Not a member? You can join FMNS by [clicking here](#)!

- Projects & Funding Opportunities
  - We're a community of practice, sharing resources and working collaboratively on projects. FMNS Cooperative members get a chance to work on group projects that benefit their market and their communities, securing free funding and resources to do so along the way.
- Training & Workshops
  - We're a North American leader in developing and delivering skill-building training programs and workshops for farmers' market vendors and personnel.
  - FMNS members get the opportunity to work one-on-one with our Communications and Creative Lead for targeted social media and marketing consults to improve the effectiveness of your social media channels and online marketing efforts. This service is offered free of charge to our members.
  - FMNS member farmers' market managers and staff can participate free of charge in our Training Tuesdays Webinar Series, and the only provincially accredited professional development series in Canada dedicated to farmers' market managers and staff.
- Resource Library
  - We carefully curate two constantly updated password-protected resource libraries full of helpful information, one for vendors, and one for market managers and staff.
- Marketing & promotion
  - We promote our member markets and their vendors through our large and ever-growing social media following.
  - We list all of our member farmers' markets in our online farmers' market map, which you can view by [clicking here](#).
  - We also include your market's information in our annual print map brochure, tens of thousands of which are distributed throughout the province!

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Discounted merchandise
  - We offer merchandise including canvas tote bags, button packs, stickers, and more at a wholesale rate to our member markets.
  - Our merchandise features the message "Shop Your Local Farmers' Market" along with original market-themed artwork by Dartmouth-based artist, Kat Frick Miller.
  - Selling FMNS merchandise at your market is a great opportunity to increase your revenue while offering beautiful products that promote the NS farmers' market sector.
- Group Liability Insurance Program
  - FMNS has brokered a deeply discounted group discount rate on farmers' market liability insurance through our relationship with the Cooperators. We also have specialized and customizable vendor liability options through our relationship with Duuo Insurance. You can learn about these two programs, exclusively available to FMNS member markets and their vendors, by [clicking here](#).
- Group Health Insurance Program
  - FMNS has also brokered a group discount rate for extended health insurance, providing a group rate for farmers' market staff, vendors, and vendor staff. This health insurance plan is exclusively for our farmers' market sector and is the only one of its kind in Canada. You can learn more about the group health insurance benefits rate by [clicking here](#).
- Advocacy
  - With over 40 farmers' markets representing over 1,500 owner-operated businesses and growing, we're widely recognized by government and industry as the voice of the sector. We actively campaign to support our members and the sector. Our members get their voices heard and have the peace of mind knowing they're part of an industry association that can represent them at multiple levels.

# MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- Community & Resources
  - Our monthly members-only industry newsletter is packed full of resources, important information, and opportunities for your market and vendors. It's the only one of its kind in Atlantic Canada.
  - FMNS also hosts several online communities through Facebook that you can use to connect with other FMNS farmers' market managers and vendors. We encourage you to join them right away:
  - You can view the *FMNS Market Managers & Staff* group by [clicking here](#). This group is for FMNS member farmers' market managers and staff only and is an active community for sharing best practices and asking questions to your peers.
  - You can view the *Market Vendor Connect* group by [clicking here](#). This group is for FMNS member farmers' market managers and for new and existing farmers' market vendors. It can be useful for vendor recruitment!
- Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program
  - FMNS member farmers' markets are also eligible to participate in the *Nourishing Communities Food Coupon Program*, which involves FMNS member farmers' markets providing an alternative currency to low-income households. FMNS provides a cheque for an amount of money based on the size of your market. The value of this money is turned into "food bucks", an alternative currency that can be redeemed exclusively with your vendors. FMNS also provides an administration contribution and covers the cost of printing or producing your alternative currency. FMNS works with you to secure one to three partner social organizations such as shelters or family resource centres.

# THANK YOU!

Farmers' Markets of Nova Scotia Cooperative Ltd.  
9 Chestnut Lane  
Dartmouth, NS  
B2Y 3X1

Email: [info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](mailto:info@farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca)  
Website: [www.farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca](http://www.farmersmarketsnovascotia.ca)  
Instagram: [@marketfreshns](https://www.instagram.com/marketfreshns)  
Facebook: [@farmersmarketsnovascotia](https://www.facebook.com/farmersmarketsnovascotia)  
Twitter: [@marketfreshns](https://twitter.com/marketfreshns)

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